

1 1. A system for detecting an observing program on a computer system, the system
2 comprising:

3 accessing instructions that access observer data, the observer data including
4 data descriptive of an observer program, the observer program being
5 programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and
6 also operating to create data from the observing of the observer
7 program;

8 reading instructions that read memory of the computer system to obtain
9 memory data;

10 comparing instructions that compare the observer data with memory data read
11 in from memory to determine whether the observer program is present
12 on the computer system;

13 generating instructions that generate results from the comparing, wherein the
14 results generated indicate whether the observer program is present on
15 the computer system; and

16 outputting instructions that obtain the results and provide the results for a
17 user.

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19 2. The system of claim 1 wherein the reading instructions read the memory of the
20 computer system by querying the operating system of the computer system
21 for the tasks running and by examining task information provided by the
22 operating system.

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2 3. The system of claim 1 wherein the outputting instructions provide the results to a
3 user through a graphical user interface.

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5 4. The system of claim 1 wherein the reading instructions read the memory of the
6 computer system by querying the file system of the computer system for the
7 files located on storage media and by examining file information provided by
8 the file system.

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10 5. The system of claim 1 wherein the reading instructions read the memory of the
11 computer system by opening a file located on storage media and by
12 examining contents of the file.

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14 6. The system of claim 1 wherein the observer data includes data descriptive of a
15 plurality of observer programs and wherein the system compares the observer
16 data with the memory data to determine whether any known observer
17 program is present.

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19 7. The system of claim 1 further comprising countermeasure instructions wherein the
20 countermeasure instructions alter the operation of the observer program.

1 8. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the
2 operation of the observer program by altering observer program configuration
3 data.

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5 9. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the
6 operation of the observer program by altering a file on the computer system.

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8 10. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the
9 operation of the observer program by altering reporting data generated by the
10 observer program.

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12 11. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the
13 operation of the observer program by replacing reporting data generated by
14 the observer program.

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16 12. The system of claim 7 wherein the countermeasure instructions alter the
17 operation of the observer program by replacing a file of the observer program.

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19 13. The system of claim 1 wherein the observer data includes data descriptive of
20 observing activity typical of observing programs and wherein the system
21 compares the observer data with the memory data to determine whether any
22 known observer program is present.

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14. The system of claim 1 further comprising the observer data, wherein the observer data includes a list of files and modules that are part of the observer program software, and wherein the reading instructions read the memory of the computer system by querying the operating system of the computer system for the tasks running and by examining task information provided by the operating system, and wherein the reading instructions also read the memory of the computer system by querying the file system of the computer system for the files located on storage media and by examining file information provided by the file system, and wherein the outputting instructions provide the results to a user through a graphical user interface.

15. The system of claim 1 wherein the system is made available over a computer network through a web site.

1 16. A system for detecting an observing program on a computer system, the system
2 comprising:

3 means for accessing observer data, the observer data including data
4 descriptive of an observer program, the observer program being
5 programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and
6 also operating to create data from the observing of the observer
7 program;

8 means for reading memory of the computer system to obtain memory data;

9 means for comparing the observer data with memory data to determine
10 whether the observer program is present on the computer system;

11 means for generating results from the comparison, wherein the results
12 generated indicate whether the observer program is present on the
13 computer system; and

14 means for outputting the results for a user.
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1 17. A method for detecting an observing program on a computer system, the
2 method comprising the steps of:
3 accessing observer data, the observer data including data descriptive of an
4 observer program, the observer program being programmed to observe
5 a user's activities on the computer system and also operating to create
6 data from the observing of the observer program;
7 reading memory of the computer system to obtain memory data;
8 comparing the observer data with memory data read in from memory to
9 determine whether the observer program is present on the computer
10 system;
11 generating results from the reading and comparing, wherein the results
12 generated indicate whether the observer program is present on the
13 computer system; and
14 outputting the results for a user.

1 18. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for detecting an observing
2 program on a computer system, wherein the instructions comprise executable
3 instructions for implementing a method comprised of the steps of:

4 accessing observer data, the observer data including data descriptive of an
5 observer program, the observer program being programmed to observe
6 a user's activities on the computer system and also operating to create
7 data from the observing of the observer program;

8 reading memory of the computer system to obtain memory data;

9 comparing the observer data with memory data read in from memory to
10 determine whether the observer program is present on the computer
11 system;

12 generating results from the reading and comparing, wherein the results
13 generated indicate whether the observer program is present on the
14 computer system; and

15 outputting the results for a user.

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17 19. The computer-readable medium of claim 18 wherein the computer-readable
18 medium is a data transmission medium.

1 20. A system for altering the operation of an observer program on a computer
2 system, the system comprising:

3 accessing instructions that access observer information, the observer

4 information including data descriptive of the observer program, the

5 observer program being programmed to observe a user's activities on

6 the computer system and also operating to create data from the

7 observing of the observer program;

8 reading instructions that read memory of the computer system to obtain files

9 relating to the observer program;

10 altering instructions that alter a file relating to the observer program such that

11 the operation of the observer program is changed.

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13 21. The system of claim 20 further comprising an observer detection program.

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15 22. The system of claim 20 further comprising inputting instructions that display to a
16 user options regarding the altering and that take input from the user relating to
17 the options.

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19 23. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of
20 the observer program by altering observer program configuration data.

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22 24. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of
23 the observer program by altering a file on the computer system.

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2 25. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of
3 the observer program by altering reporting data generated by the observer
4 program.

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6 26. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of
7 the observer program by replacing reporting data generated by the observer
8 program.

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10 27. The system of claim 20 wherein the altering instructions alter the operation of
11 the observer program by replacing a file of the observer program.

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13 28. The system of claim 20 wherein the system is made available over a computer
14 network through a web site.
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1 29. A system for altering the operation of an observer program on a computer
2 system, the system comprising:

3 means for accessing observer information, the observer information including
4 data descriptive of the observer program, the observer program being
5 programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and
6 also operating to create data from the observing of the observer
7 program;

8 means for reading memory of the computer system to obtain files relating to
9 the observer program; and

10 means for altering a file relating to the observer program such that the
11 operation of the observer program is changed.
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1 30. A method for altering the operation of an observer program on a computer
2 system, the method comprising the steps of:

3 accessing observer information, the observer information including data

4 descriptive of the observer program, the observer program being

5 programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and

6 also operating to create data from the observing of the observer

7 program;

8 reading memory of the computer system to obtain files relating to the observer

9 program; and

10 altering a file relating to the observer program such that the operation of the

11 observer program is changed.

1 31. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for altering the operation of
2 an observer program on a computer system, wherein the instructions comprise
3 executable instructions for implementing a method comprised of the steps of:

4 accessing observer information, the observer information including data

5 descriptive of the observer program, the observer program being

6 programmed to observe a user's activities on the computer system and

7 also operating to create data from the observing of the observer

8 program;

9 reading memory of the computer system to obtain files relating to the observer

10 program; and

11 altering a file relating to the observer program such that the operation of the

12 observer program is changed.

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14 32. The computer-readable medium of claim 31 wherein the computer-readable
15 medium is a data transmission medium.